



# Historic Civil Rights Commemorations Task Force Chapel Hill Nine Recommendation



# Background

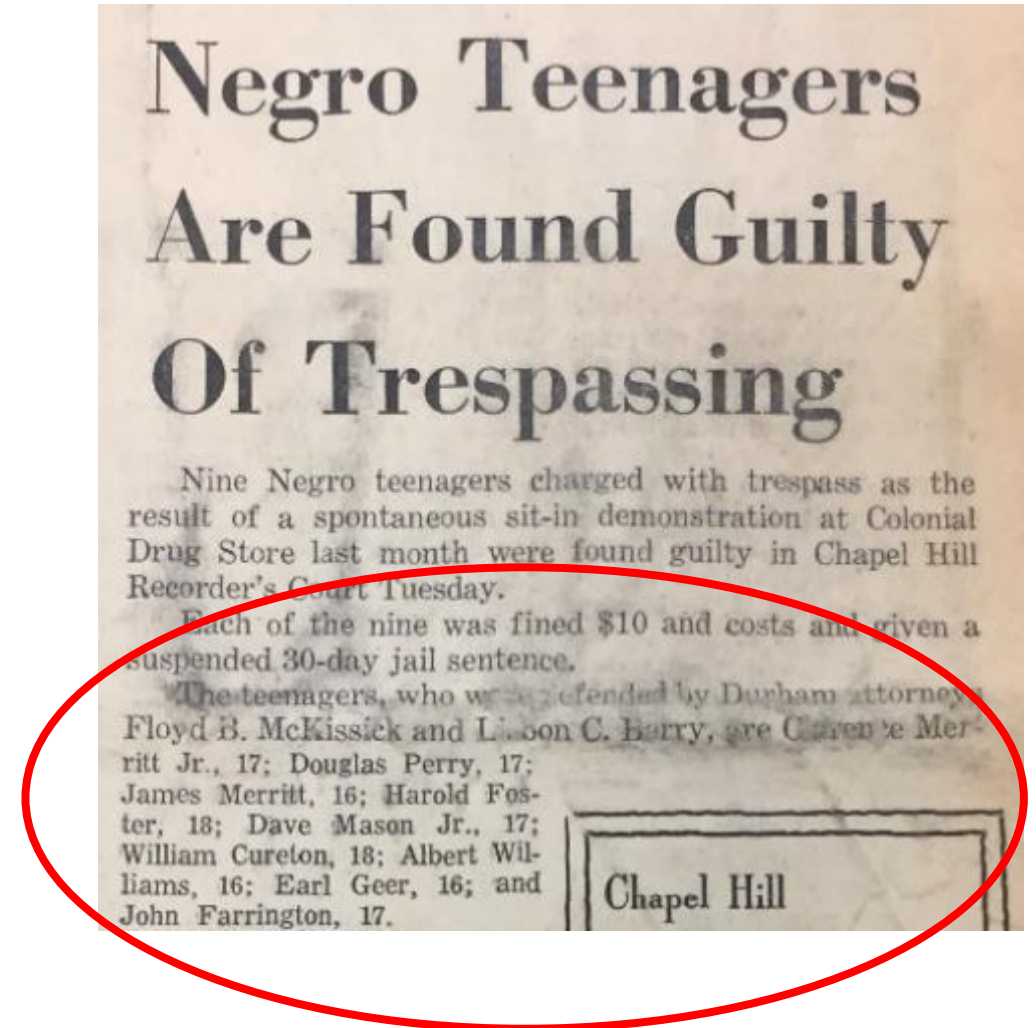
**September 2017**

Mayor Hemminger forms Historic Civil Rights Commemorations Task Force.



# Background

Clarence Merritt Jr., 17  
Douglas Perry, 17  
James Merritt, 16  
Harold Foster, 18  
Dave Mason Jr., 17  
William Cureton, 18  
Albert Williams, 16  
Earl Geer, 16  
John Farrington, 17





# Background

## June 2018:

- HCRC Task force presents Council with report of its work & timeline of Chapel Hill Civil Rights, fulfilling its charge.
- Council authorizes the Chapel Hill Nine subcommittee to develop a recommendation for historical marker.



# Updates



# Share & Engage

### FEBRUARY 28 - THE SPARK

Inspired by the Greensboro Four, high school seniors from Lincoln High School wrote General Shop letters, all of a sudden and soon the same service Blue Valley students receive. They choose to stand with those who refused service and had to show. This act later leads to their arrest, trial, and conviction for criminal trespass.



### Integration Is Complete At Theater

After, this town is hard to crack. It's called a liberal place, but that's a mirage, man. When you go to get water, you just get a mouthful of sand. - Harold Foster

### 1960

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visits Chapel Hill.** He speaks at Roberson Street Community Center, University Baptist Church, and UNC.

**SUMMER HEAT**  
After negotiations result in little change, Lincoln High School students stage a second appearance at the "Big Johnny" (Colonial Drug, Chapel Hill). Nine students are arrested.

**Negro Teenagers Are Found Guilty Of Trespassing**

"We were troublemakers. We questioned authority and challenged it head on... we were disobedient to that extent, disobedient to those who told us to be obedient, but obedient to our own consciences as it was" - Harold Foster

### SPRING 1961 - MOVEMENT ON FIRE

**KEY ORGANIZERS: JOHN STRONGE**

Integration is Complete At Theater

500 citizens of the town, about half of them white and half of them colored, began what was perhaps the first fully integrated public march in support of integration that the South had seen. - John Ehle, *The Free Men*

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE**  
400-500 people march in support of integration, peacefully and without violence.

### 1961

**SCHOOL DESEGREGATION**  
Lincoln High School students stage a second appearance at the "Big Johnny" (Colonial Drug, Chapel Hill). Nine students are arrested.

**Staley Vickers Was Fought To Attend Integrated School**

### 1962

**CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

The first mass civil disobedience demonstration at the Merchants Association results in 34 arrests.

### FALL

Students immediately begin a sit-in at the lunchroom in Town Hall when others blocking the front door. Some protesters remain for several days.

### WINTER

Chapel Hill Freedom Committee forms. John Quinlan (PhD), Gordon Baker (veteran), SR are at Chapel Hill. Quinlan Baker vote after SR are at Chapel Hill. Quinlan Baker vote after SR are at Chapel Hill. Quinlan Baker vote after SR are at Chapel Hill.

### ACCESS OFFICIALLY DENIED

January 1961

"Have I honestly and sincerely done all in my power to eliminate racial discrimination in Chapel Hill?" - The Factors

2 Black Protest Day of Fear in Civil Rights Protest of Chapel Hill

**GRADUATION DAY**

**KAREN PARKER**  
Karen Parker, the first African American woman to graduate at UNC and active member of the movement, graduates with a degree in journalism.

### 1964

**VIOLENT BACKLASH**  
Quinlan-Baker along with other protesters, showed with Clarks and downtown at a branch of the Stock Pile. He was taken to the hospital with foot injuries from a car and had his stomach pumped. There violence at Vickers' hotel demonstration.

**FREEDOM FOR CHRISTMAS**  
Coordinated protests intensify after the violence, resulting in approximately 200 arrests in the days leading up to December 25. Eleven protesters spend Christmas day in jail.

### 1965

**FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATES, CHAPEL HILL HIGH**

Sheila Bynum (not pictured), Brian Edwards, Clementine Farrington, Deborah Fourtine, Eugene Harris, Brenda McMillan, and Constance LaVerne Peace graduate in Spring, 1965.

**CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**  
The Civil Rights Act passed by Congress. It was a landmark in the country's race relations, as it gave federal government the power to enforce desegregation. It also gave the federal government the power to enforce desegregation.

### 1966

**LINCOLN HIGH**

As I travel south on North Graham Street toward Rosemary, I see Greenbridge stretching toward the city. No longer do I see Mason's Grocery, the Starlight Supper Club or the Mason Hotel, where James Brown and Ella Fitzgerald stayed because they were not allowed to stay at the Holiday Inn or the Carolina Inn. You see, we got what we wanted but we lost what we had. - David Mason

### WHAT WAS LOST

**KLOPPER V NORTH CAROLINA**  
The State of North Carolina charged James Klopfer with criminal trespass for his participation in Chapel Hill's civil rights demonstrations. His case that went all the way to the US Supreme Court. In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court found that North Carolina had violated Klopfer's right to a speedy trial.

**ALBERT WILLIAMS**  
Albert Williams, among the pioneers of the original Lincoln High School demonstration, is named as the first African American to fight for the Town of Chapel Hill.

### 1967

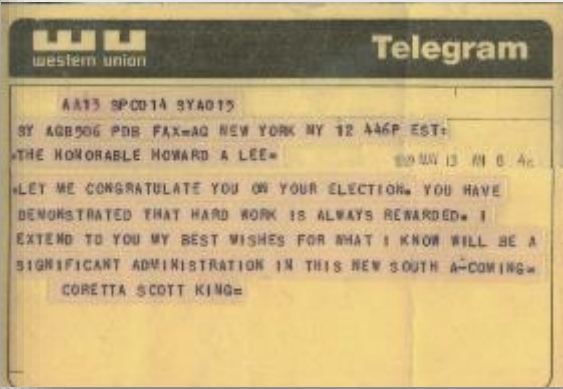
**ELECTION OF HOWARD LEE**  
Lee became the first African American elected mayor in a predominantly white southern town since Reconstruction. Lee was elected to the office after having received election by being overruled.

**UNC FOOD WORKERS STRIKE**  
UNC food workers participated in work strikes, protesting unfair labor practices. Protests point the way to the future actions: intersecting labor rights, women's rights, and African American rights.

**Opening Our Future**  
A Historic Civil Rights Commemorations Task Force Project



# Share & Engage



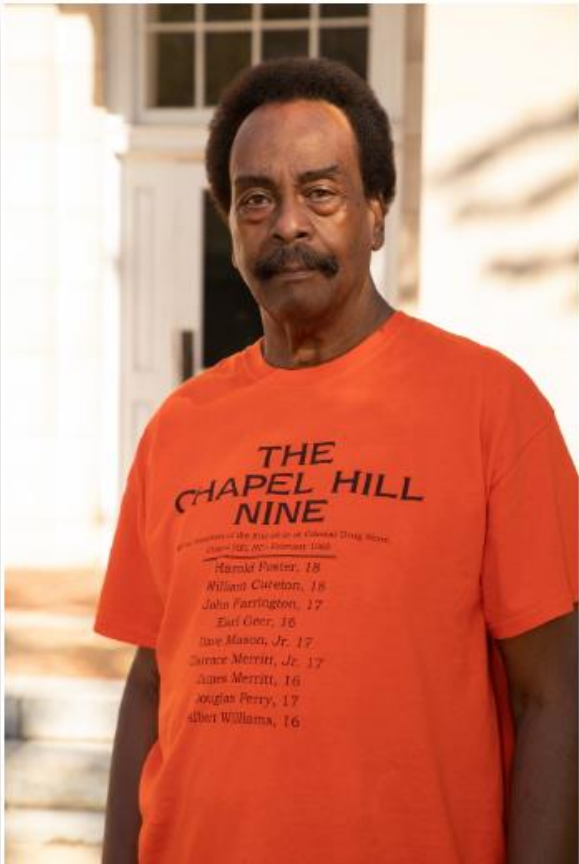
# Share & Engage



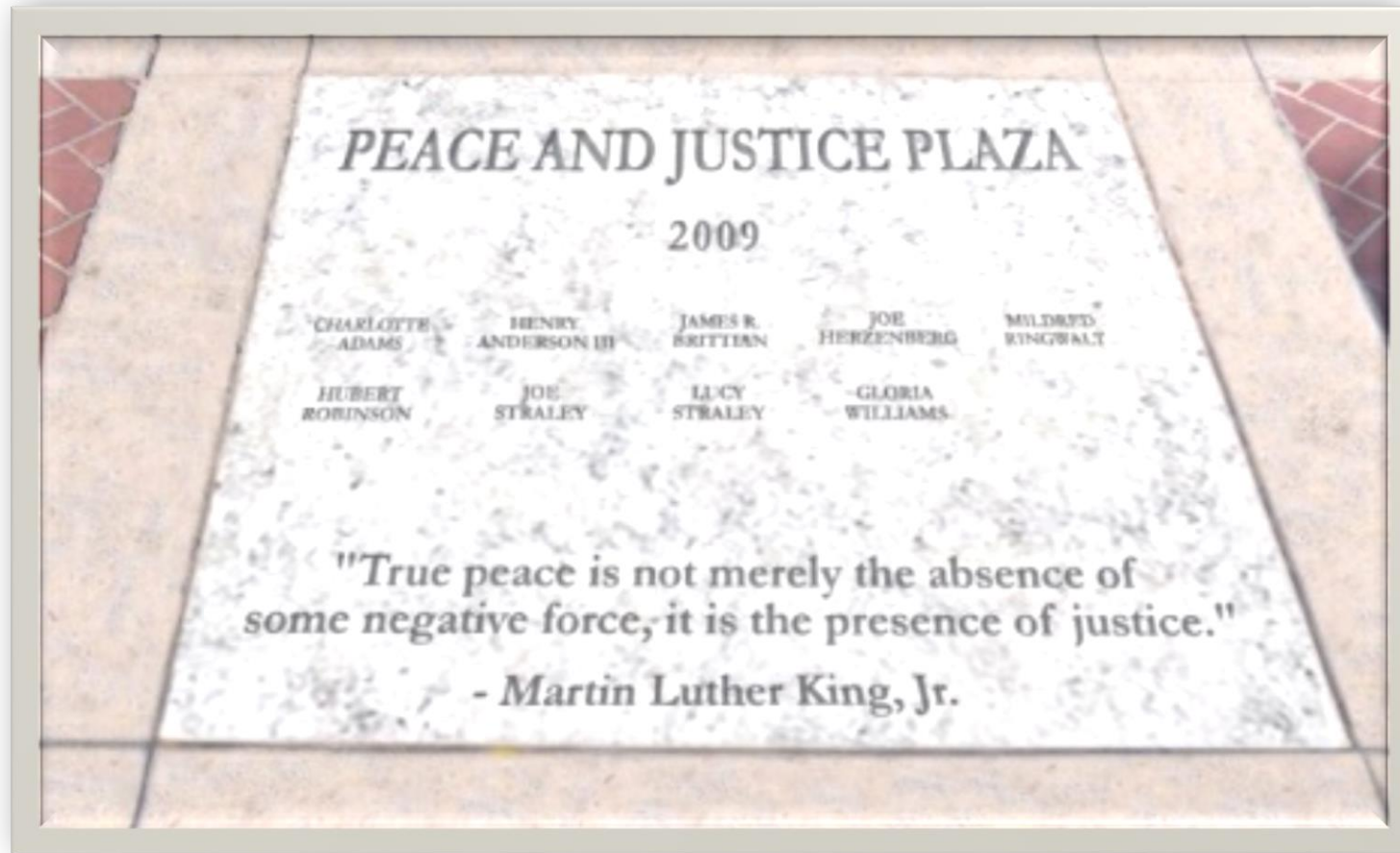
Save the Date for an Exhibit Opening  
**Open Our Future**  
Friday, November 30 at 7:00



# Honor History Makers



# Commemorate





# Background

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- **Council authorizes the Chapel Hill Nine subcommittee to develop a recommendation for historical marker.**



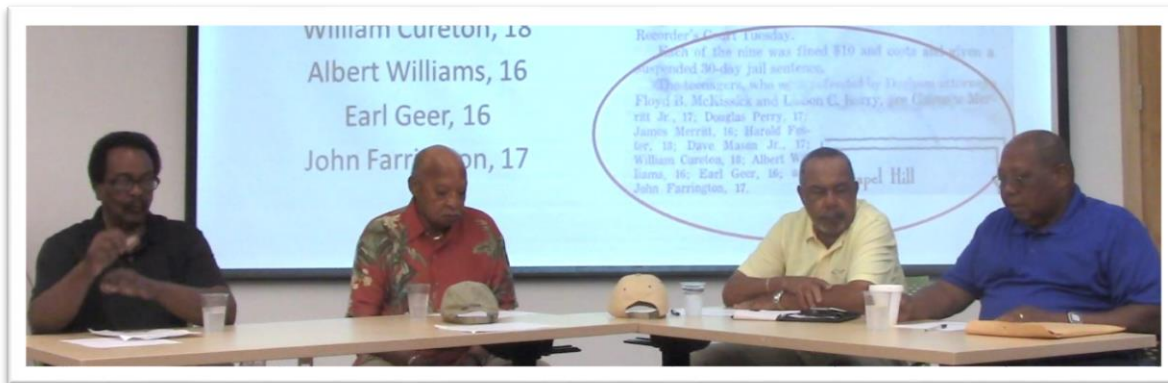


# Charge

Develop a recommendation for a commemorative marker honoring the high school students responsible for Chapel Hill's first sit-in.

- Reconcile the historical record
- Engage stakeholders
- Develop interests and design considerations for marker

# Reconcile Historical Record



- Review secondary sources, oral histories, & primary source documents
- Interview history makers
- Reach agreement with historians, community



# Reconcile Historical Record

## In Racial Demonstrations

### Teenagers Stand Trial Tomorrow

Nine Negro teenagers charged with trespass in last week's spontaneous sitdown demonstrations at Colonial Drug Store will be tried Tuesday morning in Chapel Hill Recorder's Court.

Legal counsel for the youths will be Floyd B. Durham Negro attorney also representing Chapel Hill families in integration suit.

Colonial Drug Store attorney Carswell, who signed warrants against the demonstrators, retained attorney Charles W. Williams as private counsel.

The nine teenagers, 11 Negro boys who were arrested last week after the sitdown at the drug store

The committee on racial equality sponsored the organized demonstrations at the same drug store last February and March, and those arrested last week participated in the earlier demonstrations.

## Again

### Arrested Here Demonstration

February 16.

Another teenager, John Farrington, has been charged along with the eight. But Police Chief William D. Blake said the warrant had not been served on him yesterday.

at the auspices of the group conducting the demonstrations.

The Negro drug store was closed Monday and Tuesday by Mr. Carswell.

### Young Chapel Hill Negroes Protest At Lunch Counters

By Dwayne Walls

The sitdown strike in protest against segregated lunch counter service erupted in Chapel Hill last week with Lincoln High

staged their demonstration shortly after noon yesterday at Howard Johnson's restaurant on the Durham Boulevard.

Their strike was short-lived,

18-year-old Lincoln senior Harold Foster, said the demonstration would be resumed next week with adult Negro leadership.

He said the group organized Tuesday



### Negro Teenagers Are Found Guilty Of Trespassing

Nine Negro teenagers charged with trespass as the result of a spontaneous sit-in demonstration at Colonial Drug Store last month were found guilty in Chapel Hill Recorder's Court Tuesday.

Each of the nine was fined \$10 and costs and given a suspended 30-day jail sentence.

The teenagers, who were defended by Durham attorneys Floyd B. McKissick and Leason C. Barry, are Clarence Merritt Jr., 17; Douglas Perry, 17; James Merritt, 16; Harold Foster, 18; Dave Mason Jr., 17; William Cureton, 18; Albert Williams, 16; Earl Geer, 16; and John Farrington, 17.

Chapel Hill



# Recommendation

## **Install a commemorative marker**

This history should be permanently commemorated for the benefit of the whole community and future generations.

# Design Interests

- Inform visitors about the first sit-in in Chapel Hill, including who the Chapel Hill Nine were and their role in Chapel Hill's Civil Rights Movement.
- Be located in historical context at the site of the first sit-in.
- Be physically and intellectually accessible and engaging to a broad audience.
- Inspire reflection and conversation.
- Be aesthetically pleasing.
- Evoke community history and connections.

# Engage Stakeholders



THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL



WEST END ENTERTAINMENT  
601 W MAIN ST, SUITE E  
DURHAM, NC 27701  
919.636.8543



October 12, 2018

Town Council  
Town of Chapel Hill  
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Council Members,

I am writing in support of the Chapel Hill Nine Committee's proposed commemorative marker honoring the first sit-ins in Chapel Hill.

In 1960, 450 West Franklin Street was home to Colonial Drug Co., the site of the first sit-in protesting the segregated lunch counter housed inside the drugstore. As the current owner of the building and the business, West End Wine Bar, now located at 450 West Franklin Street, I fully support the commemoration of this event with the proposed marker.

The general manager of my companies has met with members of the Chapel Hill Nine Committee to learn about the concept behind the commemorative marker, its proposed location, and initial design concept. The proposed plan has my full support and the support of the general manager, Olivia Gray.

We are honored to be part of this process and proud for this location to be recognized as the site of such an important historical event for the Town of Chapel Hill and its community.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jared Resnick".

Jared Resnick  
Owner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olivia Gray".

Olivia Gray  
General Manager

West End Entertainment, LLC  
601 West Main St, Suite E, Durham, NC  
919-636-8543 | [olivia@westendwinebar.com](mailto:olivia@westendwinebar.com)



# Text & Photos

On this site on Sunday, February 28, 1960, nine young men from Lincoln High School entered what was then the Colonial Drug Store, sat at a booth and sought the same service that was given to white customers. They remained seated after they were refused service and told to leave. In time, they left voluntarily and were confronted by police who took down their names as they stood on this sidewalk.

Their courageous step sparked a decade of civil rights demonstrations in Chapel Hill.

# Text & Photos



Harold Foster (18)  
William Cureton (18)  
John Farrington (17)



Earl Geer (16)  
David Mason Jr. (17)  
Clarence Merritt Jr. (17)

James Merritt (16)  
Douglas "Clyde" Perry (17)  
Albert Williams (16)



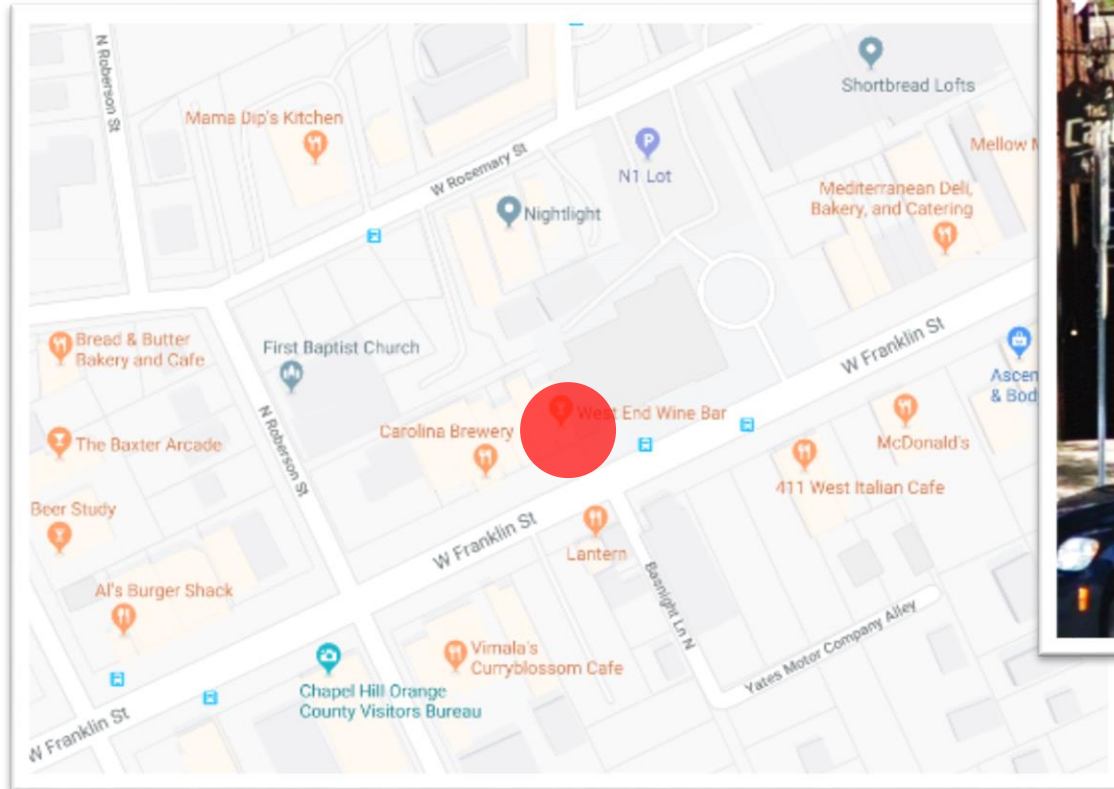
# Materials



“In the hallways of Lincoln High School, after school at M `n N’s Grill, and late at night on the **Rock Wall**, black teenagers were talking, reflecting on the protest movement that was spreading across the state, and reaching decisions, both personal and collective, about how to act.”



# Location



# In Memory

We were troublemakers.  
We *questioned* authority and  
*challenged* it head on. . . .  
we were *disobedient* to that  
extent, disobedient to those  
who told us to be obedient,  
but obedient to our own  
consciences as it were.

–Harold Foster



# Recommended Council Action

That the Council:

- Accept the recommendation for commemorative marker
- Refer implementation to Town Manager and staff
- Dissolve subcommittee